



Facts About . . .

SOURCE REDUCTION

SOURCE REDUCTION AT HOME



The Facts

In 2001 Marylanders produced about 4.5 million tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). To put the 4.5 million tons in perspective, that is enough waste to build a 3 feet wide by 6 feet tall wall 4288 miles long. That's long enough for 2 round trips from Baltimore to Miami. Maryland deals with all of its waste by landfilling 53%, incinerating 20%, and transporting 27% out of state.

What is Source Reduction? Simply stated, Source Reduction is the elimination of waste before it is created. It involves the design, manufacture, purchase, or use of materials and products to reduce the amount or toxicity of what is thrown away. Source Reduction, can go a long way to reducing the costs associated with the transportation, disposal or recycling of waste. Best of all, practicing Source Reduction can save you money!

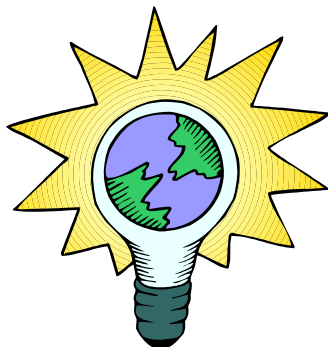
What Can You Do?

At the Store

- ✓ Use cloth or mesh bags to hold your purchases when shopping.
- ✓ Return hangers to dry cleaners for reuse.
- ✓ Purchase items in concentrated form, bulk, or economy sizes that use the least amount of packaging. *In addition to being cheaper and using less packaging, the use of these items eliminates the waste associated with many of the food containers used on single-serving items that cannot be recycled.*
- ✓ Purchase items in containers that have other uses.
- ✓ Purchase high-quality, long-lasting products.
- ✓ Purchase non-toxic items whenever possible.



At Home



- ✓ Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient long-lasting compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- ✓ Use rechargeable batteries whenever possible.
- ✓ Donate unwanted items (e.g., clothing, equipment, furniture, appliances).
- ✓ Repair older items rather than purchasing new ones.
- ✓ Reupholster furniture instead of purchasing new pieces.
- ✓ Use cloth towels, napkins and rags instead of disposable paper products that cannot be recycled.

- ✓ Avoid using disposable cups, plates and cutlery.
- ✓ Save bows, tissue paper, polystyrene peanuts, gift boxes, and newspaper to wrap gifts in the future.
- ✓ Donate back-issues of magazines to schools for use in school projects or to a doctor's office for patients to read.
- ✓ Rent instead of buy infrequently used tools or equipment.
- ✓ Use the backs of old envelopes for store lists or phone messages.
- ✓ Use thermoses and reusable containers for the food in your packed lunch.

In the Yard (see associated fact sheets on MDE's web page detailing composting guidelines)

- ✓ Start a backyard composting pile or use a composting bin to process organic wastes from your kitchen and yard. *Finished compost can be used as a soil amendment to improve soil quality in gardens or flowerbeds or as a top-dressing for lawn areas.*



- ✓ Leave grass trimmings on your lawn area to add nutrients back into the soil.
- ✓ Plant perennials instead of annuals that will have to be disposed of at the end of the year.
- ✓ Start an indoor redworm composter to process organic wastes from your kitchen. *Finished compost can be used to pot or fertilize houseplants.*
- ✓ Chip old, broken, or dead branches and trees and use the resulting mulch in your yard.
- ✓ Use alternatives in landscape design such as mulch islands, natural areas, and ground covers.

In 2000, Maryland started crediting its jurisdictions for source reduction activities. By conducting multi-faceted public education efforts, composting bin distributions, workshops, textile reuse projects, and Source Reduction training just to name a few, Maryland's jurisdictions can earn up to a 5% Source Reduction credit that is applied to their annual waste diversion rate. In 2002, Maryland's waste diversion rate of 39.5% (37% recycling rate and a 2.5% source reduction credit) was just shy of Maryland's 40% waste diversion goal.

MDE would like to thank the Anne Arundel County Dept. of Public Works Waste Management Services Recycling Division for the use of their source reduction informational sheets.



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